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SUBJECT: HAITI: NOVEMBER 22 NEPTUNE/JEAN-JUSTE VISIT

Classified By: CDA TIMOTHY M. CARNEY, REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D).

1. (C) Poloff visited former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune at the Pacot Prison Annex on November 22. Despite his continued hunger strike, now approaching day 200, Neptune appeared stronger than he did on the last visit of October 27. Neptune reported that his personal physician had not seen him in about one month but that he had no pressing health concerns and would await her next visit. Poloff conveyed Mrs. Neptune's continued concern for her husband's health. Neptune asked poloff to relay his message to his wife to "do what she has to do" (meaning to do what needs to be done to have him released). Neptune also reminded poloff to forward the cause for his release, although he lamented that it probably wouldn't occur under this government nor before the transition.

2. (C) Neptune also commented on his new neighbors at the annex, former Western Departmental Director Carlo Lochar and former Director of the Administrative Police Renand Etienne, who were imprisoned for their alleged role in the August 20 soccer match police operation which resulted in at least six deaths. Neptune remarked on the irony of Etienne's imprisonment at the Annex next to him. He also noted that when he turned himself over to the police in 2004, Etienne was the only officer who accompanied former police Director General Leon Charles to take him into custody. Neptune said that he resents the proximity of Lochar and Etienne in the bedroom right next to his and expressed his general lack of trust for members of the police force in Haiti.

Jean-Juste

3. (C) Father Jean-Juste appeared in good health but the mysterious swelling of his neck persisted (he insists is a result of a "beating" he received in the events surrounding his July arrest). On October 20, partisans of Father Jean-Juste from Pax Christi USA contacted poloff and expressed concern over his health. Poloff intervened and asked the Prisons Director to coordinate blood tests and x-rays by the chief prison physician. Neither the blood screenings nor the x-rays netted worrisome results, but the physician's report recommended that Jean-Juste have more extensive tests conducted, including a possible hospitalization for a biopsy of the abscess. Jean-Juste didn't complain of any discomfort, but expressed his desire to have an accurate diagnosis for the condition of his neck.

4. (C) Concerning his legal case, Jean-Juste said that Judge Peres Paul rejected his lawyer's writ of habeas corpus in October. The judge has also requested a 30-day extension from the State Prosecutor to continue his investigation. In accordance with Haitian law, the Prosecutor granted the extension and the investigation will likely continue until mid-December. Jean-Juste speculated that the extension was just a ploy to invent evidence because he doesn't believe that the prosecutor has enough information to mount a strong case against him. Meanwhile, he is awaiting a decision on his appeal to Pope Benedict XVI on his suspension by the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince. He expected that the Papal Nuncio would bring him an update this week from his recent trip to the Vatican.

5. (C) Comment: Despite the lull in media coverage on Neptune and Jean-Juste, Post will continue our regular visits and update accordingly any movement in their respective cases.
End Comment.
CARNEY